DISClaimer Single Reviews: Kelsea Ballerini Offers Sophistication & Elegance

November 13, 2025 by Robert K Oermann

Kelsea Ballerini. Photo: Patrick Tracy

It's a downbeat, ballad kinda day here at DISClaimer.

Hudson Westbrook, Riley Green, Jackson Dean, ERNEST, Pynk Beard, Jake Owen and the dynamic duo of Shaboozey & Stephen Wilson Jr. are all offering softer sounds in their new tracks. So is Kelsea Ballerini, who takes home the Disc of the Day prize.

Among the tempo tunes, the outstanding submission comes from Dalton Davis, who easily triumphs as our DISCovery Award artist of the week.

JACKSON DEAN / "Over and Over"
Writers: Jackson Dean/Luke Dick/Laura Veltz; Producer: none listed; Label: Big Machine
– Dreamy and captivating. A gentle wash of acoustic instrumentation sets the romantic mood as Dean softly seduces every note of this swirling meditation on s-e-x.

JENNA PAULETTE / "Steady"
Writers: Rhett Akins/Jenna Paulette/Will Bundy; Producer: Will Bundy; Label: Leo33
– The rolling tempo and open-air arrangement frame her country-gal vocal perfectly. She sings of her beau that he's a steady, comforting, warm presence. Authentic and believable.

JAKE OWEN / "Middle Age Crazy"
Writer: Sonny Throckmorton; Producers: Jake Owen & Shooter Jennings; Label: Good Company
– Owen slows down the 1977 Jerry Lee Lewis classic to a crawl. You have to admire the effort, since the original is so timeless, inimitable and enduring. The track is drawn from Owen's new album *Dreams to Dream*, which marks a new, contemplative shift in sound and style for him.

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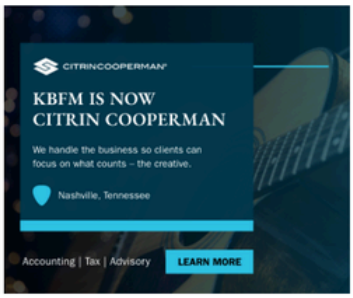
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RILEY GREEN / "Ol' Stray Dog"
Writers: Erik Dylan/Jon Randall; Producer: Erik Dylan; Label: Nashville Harbor/Big Machine
– A blue and lonesome ballad for those who are lost and wandering. Full of heart.

MAGNOLIA RISING / "Hit the Ground"
Writers: Devynn Hart/Trea Swindle/Bandana Cheyenne; Producer: Zakk Garner; Label: MR
– A rousing, rocking anthem of resilience and survival. The duo is Devynn Hart and Trea Swindle, formerly two-thirds of Chapel Hart.

KELSEA BALLERINI / "I Sit in Parks"
Writer: Kelsea Ballerini; Producers: Kelsea Ballerini, Alysa Vanderheym; Label: Black River
– Airy and pretty. In a lilting soprano, Ballerini muses on her life's direction, wistfully thinking about where she is and where she wants to be. Sophisticated and elegant sounding.

DALTON DAVIS / "Cows in the Front Yard"
Writers: Christian Stalnecker/Dalton Davis/David "Messy" Mescon/Jet Harvey; Producer: David "Messy" Mescon; Label: MCA/Republic
– Hillbilly hilarious. The ditty bops splendidly, and the lyric is steeped in redneck wit. And then there's the drawling, beyond-country, twanged vocal phrasing. Love this.

SHABOOZEY & STEPHEN WILSON JR. / "Took a Walk"
Writers: Shaboozey/Connor Sullivan/Stephen Musselman/Stephen Wilson Jr.; Producers: Sean Cook, Stephen Musselman, Connor Sullivan; Label: American Dogwood / EMPIRE
– Drawn from the soundtrack of the heartbreaking film of brotherhood titled *The Long Walk.* The stately ballad is a touching, moody meditation on death and love. Both CMA New Artist nominees sing with chesty authority. Striking and powerful. The online comments on this one are explosively massive.

HUDSON WESTBROOK / "If He Wanted To"
Writers: none listed; Producer: none listed; Label: Warner Records/River House
– Lovelorn and lovely. Wistful advice for someone yearning for someone who isn't showing up emotionally.

ERNEST / "Blessed"
Writers: ERNEST/Mark Holman/Jordan Merrigan/Matt Mulhare; Producers: ERNEST, Jacob Durrett; Label: Big Loud
– Be thankful. Your life, no matter how simple, is a gift. In mid-song, he switches to an extended, spoken-word passage.

LUCIE TIGER / "Harvest Moon"
Writers: Lucie Tiger/Stephanie C. Brown/Mark Narmore; Producer: Charles Holloman & Lucie Tiger; Label: 2120 Music
– A twanging murder ballad with a wicked, thumping, uptempo kick. This Aussie troubadour recently won the Country Vocalist of the Year honor at the Josie Awards, which recognize indie acts.

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Robert K Oermann
Robert K. Oermann is a longtime contributor to MusicRow. He is a respected music critic, author and historian.

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